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POV: WHY PHARMA SHOULD JUMP ON
BOARD WITH TWITTER CUSTOMER SERVICE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We've been saying for years that social media is an optimal channel for providing customer service to patients and HCPs alike. These days, consumers largely expect a social presence, no matter the industry.

Pharma companies often talk about the concepts of "beyond the pill," "customer-centric," and, more recently, "customer experience." Twitter just made it easier than ever to bring these concepts to life by introducing new customer service features to make user interactions more efficient and relatable.

Seventy-seven percent of people are likely to recommend a brand following a personalized **customer service interaction** on Twitter. Social customer service should no longer be ignored. This POV provides background on recent Twitter updates, details how new features may help pharma marketers, and offers potential use cases for customer service on Twitter.

BACKGROUND

In 2014, when the FDA released **draft guidance** regarding the presentation of risk and benefit information on space-constrained platforms, many pharmaceutical companies shied away from using Twitter for brand messaging. Twitter's 140-character limit makes it nearly impossible for marketers to have full product promotion, since there is not enough room for benefit and risk information needed to comply with the FDA's guidance. (See: **Anatomy of a Compliant Tweet**)

Today, consumers expect brands to have a presence on social media, and they are beginning to embrace the "conversational experience." Airlines provide flight statuses; retail companies provide shipping updates; and business applications offer technical support. One-to-one communication allows marketers to meet consumers where they are and have conversations that add real value to their lives.

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Pharma brands can use Twitter as an avenue to meet this need, providing compliant customer service across multiple audiences. Some pharma brands have been using Twitter to recruit patients to clinical trials, provide tech support for meal-tracking apps, and answer questions from a corporate account.

Twitter's recent updates have added several new features that arm marketers with the tools needed to have more efficient and relevant conversations, both in publicly and privately.

1. **Welcome Messages and Quick Replies** let brands greet people and set expectations as they enter a direct message. These messages appear without requiring users to send the first message and can include terms of use or a disclaimer about interacting with the brand. Quick replies allow marketers to create prompts to guide users to enter specific values or choose from a list of options.
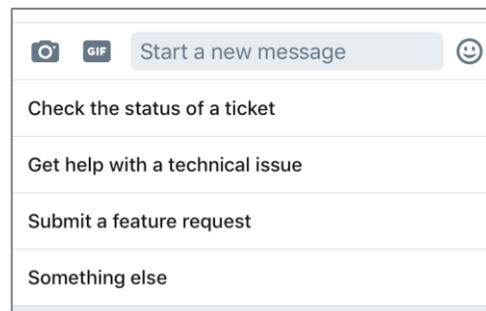
2. **Direct Message buttons** make it easier for users to start a conversation with a brand. Marketers can feature a large "Message" button directly below their account description or include a call-to-action button to privately message the page from a public, organic tweet.
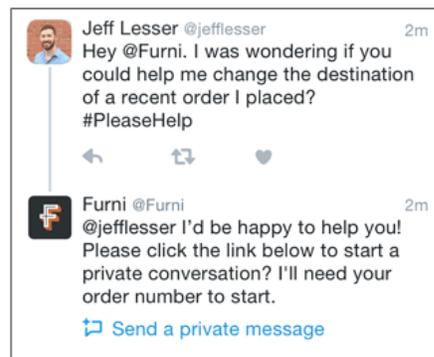
3. **Customer Feedback modules** offer brands the opportunity to ask a customer questions after interacting on Twitter to measure the effect the interaction had on a customer. Approved marketers can connect a customer service tool to Twitter to gain insights that help the brand with customer service on Twitter in the future.

4. **Customer Service profiles** give brands the chance to put faces and names to individuals responding on behalf of the brand, making the brand more personable. Twitter says these custom profiles can also be used to add personality to automated agents or branded bots.
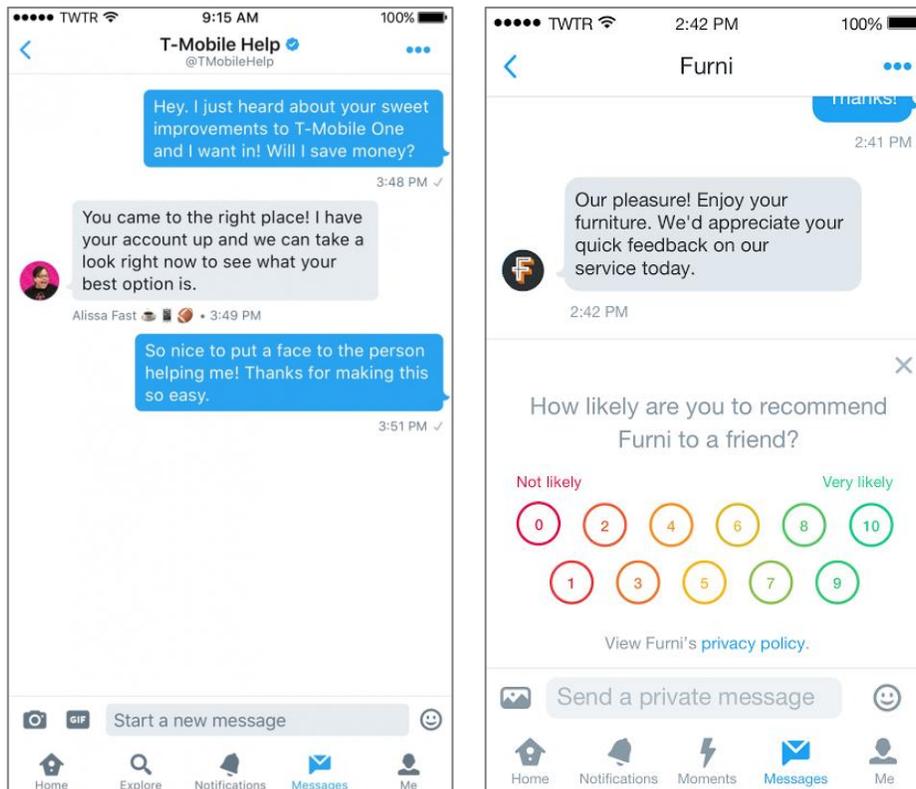
Customer Service Profiles (left) and Customer Feedback Module (right)

We've already talked about how **chatbots** may be able to assist community managers when engaging with patients and HCPs, but even brands that choose not to build automated workflows can still leverage Twitter's native tools to provide better user experiences.

POTENTIAL USE CASES

Here's how these customer service features can be used across healthcare audiences.

- **Medical science liaisons (MSLs) and pharma reps**. These groups that represent a company can use Twitter to educate and engage with healthcare professionals (HCPs), and answer questions as appropriate.

- **Payer/reimbursement services.** Brands on Twitter can provide help to office staff and patients trying to go through the reimbursement process.

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- **Patient and caregiver support.** Companies with a Twitter account can help answer patient and caregiver questions about lifestyle and treatments/devices, and help provide educational resources for disease state awareness.

- **Customer service for users of healthcare apps and other beyond-the-pill services.** [GoMeals](#) — an app that tracks physical activity, food intake and blood glucose levels — has had a Twitter presence since 2009 to help users with technical problems on the meal-tracking app. They also receive suggestions for future developments and app features from the diabetes community.

Marketers on board with this approach should develop variable pre-approved responses, which allow community managers to tailor responses to users while utilizing messaging approved by medical, legal, and regulatory teams. When possible, companies should also establish an accelerated review process for custom responses that fall outside the scope of the pre-approved responses. Balancing timely responses (user experience) and process (compliance) is important for brands to have meaningful engagements.

Ideally, brands can provide proactive customer service, listening to social conversations to answer questions and provide support even when the brands are not directly mentioned. Brands that can show they're listening to their audiences and appreciate their feedback, even when the feedback is not positive, have a better chance of producing positive engagements and meaningful interactions in the future.

CONCLUSION

Brands should have conversations with their consumers where the consumers already are. Twitter's new features make it easier for brands to feel comfortable engaging with patients, caregivers and HCPs, and answering their questions. It's time for pharma marketers to stop *talking* about going beyond-the-pill and embrace services like Twitter that allow them to do so.